21799

National Library of Canada | Bibliothèque nationale du Canada

CANADIAN THESES ON MICROFICHE | THÈSES CANADIENNES SUR MICROFICHE

NAME OF AUTHOR/*NOM DE L'AUTEUR* MARILYN ANNE DAY

TITLE OF THESIS/*TITRE DE LA THÈSE* RELATIONSHIPS OF PERCEPTIONS OF RELATIVES TO MARRIAGE SATISFACTION

UNIVERSITY/*UNIVERSITÉ* UNIV. of ALTA.

DEGREE FOR WHICH THESIS WAS PRESENTED/*GRADE POUR LEQUEL CETTE THÈSE FUT PRÉSENTÉE* M. Ed.

YEAR THIS DEGREE CONFERRED/*ANNÉE D'OBTENTION DE CE DEGRÉ* 1974

NAME OF SUPERVISOR/*NOM DU DIRECTEUR DE THÈSE* DR. W. HAGUE

Permission is hereby granted to the NATIONAL LIBRARY OF CANADA to microfilm this thesis and to lend or sell copies of the film.

The author reserves other publication rights, and neither the thesis nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's written permission.

L'autorisation est, par la présente, accordée à la BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DU CANADA de microfilmer cette thèse et de prêter ou de vendre des exemplaires du film.

L'auteur se réserve les autres droits de publication; ni la thèse ni de longs extraits de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans l'autorisation écrite de l'auteur.

DATED/*DATÉ* July 4/74 SIGNED/*SIGNÉ* M. A. Day

PERMANENT ADDRESS/*RÉSIDENCE FIXÉ* 2408 – 22 A ST. N.W.
CALGARY
ALTA.

NL-91 (11-73)

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

RELATIONSHIPS OF PERCEPTIONS OF RELATIVES TO MARRIAGE SATISFACTION

by

© MARILYN ANNE DAY

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1974

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled Relationship of Perceptions of Relatives to Marriage Satisfaction submitted by Marilyn Anne Day in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Education.

W. Hague
Supervisor

D. D. Jennings

D. G. Wangler

Date. May 24th, 1974.

ABSTRACT

The present study was concerned with establishing differences, if any, between husbands and wives in their ratings of their general feelings toward and perception of influence of their individual relatives on their marriage. It was hoped to find a relationship between these differences in the ratings and the marriage satisfaction as perceived by the husband and wife.

Questionnaires were given out to 118 couples in self addressed envelopes, 56 were returned; 41 from the residents of Michener Park and 15 from the employees of the Alberta School for the Deaf. Five point rating scales were used in the questionnaire by husbands and wives separately to gather information on the following measures; overall satisfaction of marriage, frequency of disagreements on ten items, influence of these items on the marriage, general feelings toward eighteen relatives, influence of these relatives on the marriage, distance of couple's residence from these relatives, and frequency of communication with these relatives.

The results of this study were less conclusive than anticipated possibly due to the smallness of the sample sizes. Nevertheless, it was found that general feelings toward individual relatives in many cases tended to be positively correlated with the satisfaction of marriage rating, with the wife's general feelings toward relatives being more positively correlated than those of her husband.

The hypothesis that husbands tend to rate their marriage more satisfactory than do their wives was generally supported but not at the .05 level of significance. A secondary finding was that there was a lower marriage satisfaction rating for both husbands and wives for the couples married longer.

Since significant differences between husbands and wives were not observed for the satisfaction of marriage ratings, correlations with this difference were not attempted. However, correlations were attempted between differences of ratings by husbands and wives on other variables with their actual marriage satisfaction rating.

Additional findings from the questionnaire which were not part of the hypotheses were also of interest. Out of ten "causes of disagreements", wives and husbands from Michener Park ranked relatives as first and second while Alberta School for the Deaf respondents ranked relatives as seventh and eighth. This difference in ratings as well as other differences found in the two samples, tended to suggest that couples in the early stage of the family cycle see the influence of their relatives as being quite different from couples in the later stages of the family cycle. The results also indicated that relatives, even mothers-in-law, are generally perceived as being more positive than negative.

Despite the fact that few significant results were found from the present study, these areas of interest could become the focal point of future research.

Acknowledgements

The writer wishes to express sincere appreciation to her supervisor, Dr. W. Hague and to the other members of her committee, Dr. D. Wangler and Dr. D. Sawatzky for their encouragement and constructive criticism in the preparation of this thesis.

Gratitude is expressed to all those who participated in the study from Michener Park and the Alberta School for the Deaf.

Finally, many thanks to my husband and son for their help and support throughout the work on this study.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
I	INTRODUCTION	1
	Statement of the Problem	3
	Purpose of the Present Study	4
	Hypotheses	6
	Definition of Terms	7
	Limitations of the Study	8
II	REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	9
	Prevalence of In-Law Difficulty	9
	Feminine Pattern of Friction with Relative	10
	Which In-laws Cause the Most Problems	11
	Causes of Relationship Maladjustment	12
	Relatives as Causes of Disagreements	13
	Positive Influences of Relatives	14
	Distance as a Factor in Relationships with Relatives	14
	Frequency of Contact with Relatives and Financial Aid from Relatives	15
	Satisfaction with Marriage	15
	Summary	17

		Page
Chapter		
III	DESIGN AND PROCEDURE	19
	Questionnaire	19
	Sample	20
	Procedure	21
	Analysis of Data	22
Chapter		
IV	RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	24
	Hypothesis I	24
	Hypothesis II	30
	Hypothesis III	31
	Hypothesis IV	33
	Hypothesis V	35
	Hypothesis VI	37
	Summary of Hypothesis Results	39
	Ancillary Findings	41
	Causes of Disagreements	41
	Overall General Feelings Toward Relatives	45
	Other Information from the Questionnaire	48
Chapter		
V	SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS	50
	Summary and Conclusions	50
	Implications for Further Research	52
	Implications for Future Use of the Information From this Study	53
REFERENCES		55
APPENDIX I		57

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	DESCRIPTION	PAGE
IA	Kendall's Correlations Between Marriage Satisfaction Ratings and General Feeling Toward Relatives Ratings (Michener Park).	27
IB	Kendall's Correlations Between Marriage Satisfaction Ratings and General Feeling Toward Relatives Ratings	29
II	Ratings for Husbands and Wives on Their Perception of the Satisfaction of Their Marriage.	32
III	F Values or Ratings of General Feelings Toward Relatives.	34
IV	Mean Ratings of the Influence of Relatives On Marriage	36
V	Variables from t Values for which the Responses of Husbands and Wives Differed Significantly. . . .	38
VI A	Mean Ratings of Frequency of Disagreements in Marriage on Ten Selected Subjects in Rank Order for Michener Park	43
VI B	Mean Ratings of Frequency of Disagreements in Marriage on Ten Selected Subjects in Rank Order for Alberta School for the Deaf Employees	44
VII	Mean Aggregate Ratings Towards Relatives.	46
VIII	Description of the Couples From the Means of the Two Groups	47

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

According to Duvall (Duvall and Hill, 1960, p. 209), every married couple belongs to three families: themselves, his family and her family. This process of adjusting to three families at once can pose a somewhat difficult task for many couples. Relatives cannot be disregarded as they are a part of the family group. They were, and in many cases still are, instrumental in molding the personalities of the husband and wife.

Much has been written about the nature of the problems that in-laws and other relatives cause. The positive aspects of their contribution to the family unit has been dealt with to a lesser extent. Duvall (1954) analyzed both positive and negative aspects of in-laws, which was an attempt to dispel the generalized negative reputation of relatives.

Mothers-in-law in particular seem to have gained historical notoriety which is evident in many of the taboos of other cultures. Navaho men believed that the sight of their mother-in-law on their wedding day would produce blindness. Consequently, she did not attend the wedding. Needless to say, mother-in-law jokes have been very popular for many years. Duvall (1954) analyzed the content of these jokes which depicted mothers-in-law as being very negative people.

Since a greater proportion of the family's life is family-centered, the finding by many authors that in-law friction seems to have a feminine pattern is not surprising. Interrelationships within the family are generally felt to be the woman's responsibility. Any disharmony arising is more a cause for the wife's concern than for her husband who tends to focus his attention more on outside affairs.

The view that adjustment to relatives and in-laws is a function of the maturity of the couple at the time of marriage is a popular position taken by many authors. Landis and Landis (1963, p. 337) made the comment that even in reportedly successful marriages, husbands and wives had not been completely weaned psychologically at the time of marriage. Parental advice is often seen as interference by the couple. Parental immaturity may in many cases play a part in in-law friction as well. They may cling to their children and resist the diversion of the child's emotional focus.

It is thought that negative stereotypes also account for how a newly married couple may react to their new in-laws. A spouse may have been conditioned to expect certain behaviors from their in-laws.

In-laws can probably contribute to marriage breakdown but it is unlikely that they in fact cause the marriage failure. Landis and Landis (1963) felt that many of the young people who complain that they have in-law trouble illustrated that the trouble lies within the complaining individuals themselves and that such people would have had in-law misunderstanding and conflict regardless of whom they had

married. Satir (1972) explains that many problems with relatives are an extension of feelings not worked out about the person himself.

Nevertheless, research findings by Landis and Landis (1963) indicate that the whole subject of in-law relationships has not received enough attention in the preparation of young people for marriage.

Statement of the Problem

For some time now, relatives have been stereotyped as having a negative influence on marriages. When a couple has been newly married, it would be an asset to let them know that relatives can have very positive influences on a marriage as well as negative influences.

The fact that some marriage breakups blame relatives as being the prime cause leads one to wonder if this is true. How much influence do relatives really have on a marriage?

Since husbands and wives are not likely to feel exactly the same about their relatives or about the influence these relatives have on their marriage, it would be of interest to note these differences, whether they be large or small, significant or insignificant.

It has been found (Landis and Landis, 1963) that there is a positive correlation between happiness in marriage and getting along with in-laws. It would be of interest to study whether or not differences between husbands and wives usually occur in both areas;

happiness in marriage, and feelings towards relatives as well as their influence on the marriage.

Since maintaining contact with relatives is considered a "feminine affair", then perhaps the wife's marriage satisfaction is affected to a greater extent than is her husbands by their relationships with their relatives.

Purpose of the Present Study

The findings of specific studies which support the following discussion appear in Chapter II.

It was of interest in the present study to establish differences if any between husbands and wives in their ratings of their relatives on their marriage. The majority of the research in this area has mainly dealt with the term in-laws which is less inclusive than relatives and has pointed to the negative aspects of relationships with these in-laws. The present author desired a more inclusive picture by looking for the positive as well as the negative aspects of the broader topic of relatives rather than in-laws alone. The fact that relatives can also have a more positive influence on marriage has not been particularly evident in the research with the exception of a few authors such as Duvall and Satir.

The term influence of relatives on a marriage was perhaps implied by other studies but was not stated as such. Other authors generally tended to ask such questions as what was the most serious problem in achieving happiness in marriage or how many couples

had not worked out a satisfactory adjustment with relatives in their marriage. It was of interest to this author to establish not only general feelings about specific relatives but also the extent to which these relatives actually influenced the marriage as perceived by the couples themselves, with emphasis again on the differences between husband and wife.

The study by Landis and Landis (1963) which found a positive correlation between in-law adjustment and the self-rating of happiness in marriage somewhat parallels the present study. However, it did not emphasize the actual influence of these relatives or the differences between husband and wife and dealt with in-laws as opposed to relatives. The present author's research includes a broad range of relatives such as grandparents and cousins as well as immediate members of the family. It was also of interest to emphasize differences in ratings between husbands and wives to attempt to find relationships between satisfaction of marriage and influence of relatives where that difference occurs.

Little research has been published describing differences between husbands and wives in their perceptions of relatives as a cause of disagreements. From previous research, one would expect disagreements due to relatives to be quite common in the early years of marriage and that the wife would tend to rate them higher as causes of disagreements than would her husband.

The findings of the present study are based on questionnaires which were given out in self-addressed envelopes to couples.

Instructions were given to complete the questionnaires separately except for one aspect which entailed choosing relatives who had been the most influential on their marriage, either positively or negatively, which were then used for the latter part of the questionnaire. The envelopes were returned by mail anonymously with personal contact occurring only when the questionnaires were given out. Material from 41 couples from Michener Park and fifteen couples from the Alberta School for the Deaf employees were used for the analysis.

Hypotheses

Based on the research cited in Chapter II and the preceding discussion of the present author's specific area of interest, the following hypotheses were put forth.

1. The general feelings of husbands and wives toward individual relatives are positively correlated with their satisfaction rating of the marriage.
2. The wife's general feelings towards individual relatives is more positively correlated with the satisfaction rating of the marriage than the husband's general feelings.
3. Husbands tend to rate their marriage as being more satisfactory than do their wives.
4. There is more variation in the wife's general feelings toward their individual relatives than in the husband's general feelings toward their individual relatives.

5. Wives perceive the influence of individual relatives on their marriage as being greater than do their husbands.
6. Where there is a difference in perceptions between husbands and wives on the influence of relatives on the marriage, there is likely to be a corresponding difference in the rating of the marriage satisfaction.

Definition of Terms

"Overall satisfaction" of marriage alludes to the five point rating scale which appears in the questionnaire. The respondent had a choice of the following responses:

-2 = very unsatisfactory
-1 = somewhat unsatisfactory
0 = neutral
+1 = somewhat satisfactory
+2 = very satisfactory

In this instance, a rating of -2 means that they feel that their marriage is very unsatisfactory and similarly, a rating of +2 means that they feel that their marriage is very satisfactory.

The term "general feelings" appears in the last page of the questionnaire and means that the person gives a rating of from -2 to +2 or in other words, he feels very negatively to very positively about a specific relative.

The amount of influence a relative has on the marriage is defined by the questionnaire rating scale and can vary from -2 meaning a very negative influence to +2 meaning a very positive influence.

Limitations of the Present Study

Due to the biased nature of the Michener Park and Alberta School for the Deaf samples, it is not possible to generalize beyond the residents of these groups with the results of this study. The Michener Park residents' educational level and style of living are not representative of the general population. The fact that the Alberta School for the Deaf is a government institution and draws upon employees who wish to work with the handicapped could also mean that this sample too is biased.

The questionnaire used to collect the data was devised by the author which renders exact comparison with other studies impossible. The reliability of the results would have to be determined by repeating the study.

The number of couples used in this study is somewhat less than that cited by other authors in this area which could account for some of the difference in results. The definitiveness of the conclusions reached from observation of the statistical analysis was severely hampered by the small size of the sample.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Prevalence of In-law Difficulty

The seriousness of the problem of in-laws was put forth in a study by Landis (1946, p. 668) who found that women said that this was the second most serious problem in achieving happiness in marriage. Men ranked it as third. They suggested that in-laws are more of a problem in early marriage and that the relationship either becomes chronic or is successfully worked out.

Thomas (1956, p. 232) found that of all the failures of marriage in his study using 7,000 Catholic marriage failures, only seven per cent of them were attributed to in-law problems. Of those marriages that failed within the first year, in-law problems were cited as the most common cause.

The prevalence of this adjustment of couples to relatives was studied by Landis (1946, p. 669) who found that about one in ten couples had not worked out a satisfactory adjustment with relatives after more than twenty years of marriage. He concluded that in-laws can pose important problems for one out of every five or six marriages.

It would appear that age affects the degree of in-law difficulty. Blood and Wolfe (1960, p. 248) found that the younger the couple, the more difficulty they experienced with in-laws. Komarovsky (1950, p. 516) suggested that in-law tensions vary with

the stage of the family cycle.

Duvall's findings (1954, p. 65) confirmed the hypothesis that in-law problems are more common in the early years of marriage.

In-law difficulty is not a function of our culture alone. In a cross cultural survey of two hundred and fifty societies, Murdock (Duvall and Hill, 1960, p. 211) found that eighty-one per cent of the societies around the world had some form of mother-in-law trouble.

Feminine Pattern of Friction with Relatives

Many authors agree that friction with relatives seems to follow a feminine pattern. Landis and Landis (1963, p. 333) said that it is the wife who more often thinks that in-laws are a problem and that it is mothers-in-law, sisters-in-law and wives who are involved more frequently than the male side of the family.

Duvall (1954, p. 289) substantiated this claim of a feminine pattern of friction with in-laws and suggested that this may be due to the fact that women of the family are assigned the role of maintaining close relationships within the family. She found that nine out of ten complaints about mother-in-law problems came from women.

Support for this view came from Adams (1968, p. 27) who found that women were more likely to say that relatives were "very important" while men were more likely to say that they were "somewhat" important.

According to Robins and Tomanec (1962, p. 345), respondents of their study said that they felt closer to their mother's side of the family in sixty per cent of the cases. He felt that women tended to act as the representative of their marriage in fulfilling obligations to relatives.

Rosenbery and Anspach (1973, p. 93) found that both husbands and wives tended to see more members of the wife's family more frequently than either of them saw the husband's family.

Which In-laws Cause the Most Problems

When asked to specify which in-law relationship they saw as the center of the trouble, respondents in a study done by Landis and Landis (1963, p. 333) indicated that the mother-in-law is the family member who causes the most friction. Furthermore, it appeared that the husband's mother causes the most problems followed by the wife's mother and then the husband's sister. The fact that the husband's family seemed to cause the most problems is not surprising when one considers that wives tend to be the ones who are more involved with relatives than are their husbands.

Wallin (1954, p. 466) reported that more wives than husbands dislike their mothers-in-law.

Duvall's research (1954, p. 187) agreed with the previous findings and stipulated that 49.5 per cent of the 992 men and women mentioned mother-in-law as the most difficult of their relatives. She was followed in importance by the husband's sister.

Causes of Relationship Maladjustment with Relatives

Definitive proof of the causes of relationship maladjustment with relatives has not been readily available; however the dependence of the husband or wife upon the parent has been put forth as one of many plausible reasons. Klemer (1970, p. 282) looked at the problem rather realistically when he said:

> Possessive mothers and fathers are not likely to stop being possessive just because their children get married nor are dominating parents likely to stop being dominating. .

He felt that mothers are often reluctant to give up the satisfaction of their roles and that newcomers to the family group often have difficulty fitting into established relationship patterns.

Landis and Landis (1963, p. 337) put forth the idea that immaturity of parents may be manifested by their resistance to their child's leaving them to marry and have children who will be dearer to them than their own parents.

Negative stereotypes likely influence a couple such that they may become defensive toward specific in-laws.

Duvall and Hill (1960, p. 219) specified other possible reasons, a few of which are the couple's inability to handle interference from their parents and the comparing of one set of parents with the other.

It was the belief of Winch (1952, p. 573) that the strong attachment between the mother and son can interfere with his adjustment in marriage. He found that the mother is the preferred

parent of both husband and wife.

By reiterating an old folklore item, Sussman (1955, p. 238) attempted to explain the fact that the husband's family usually creates more trouble:

> your son is your son till he takes him a wife,
> your daughter is your daughter all her life.

It may be that the son's parents resist the thought of losing him.

The psycho-analytical approach to this problem has been explained by Flugel (1935, p. 95) who felt that there may be a displacement by the child-in-law of his feelings toward his own parents onto his parents-in-law. These feelings may have been love or hate which were repressed toward his own parents. Similarly there could have been a corresponding displacement by parents-in-law of feelings they may have had toward their own children but which had not been expressed.

Relatives as Causes of Disagreements

It would appear that the number of disagreements a couple experiences is related to the length of time they have been married. Blood and Wolfe (1960, p. 247) found that disagreements over in-laws were the most common in the honeymoon stage, declining steadily thereafter.

Saxton (1972, p. 299) made a somewhat conflicting statement that marriage counselors and family-service agencies agree that economic stress is the main cause of conflict in American families.

Thus perhaps the duration of marriage is the important determinant in predicting disagreements in marriage in that relatives would likely cause more disagreements in early marriage only.

Positive Influences of Relatives

Duvall (1954, p. 139) was instrumental in attempting to dispel the negative stereotype of mothers-in-law. In her study, however, only twenty-five per cent of all men and women who submitted information on their mothers-in-law said that they appreciated the kind of person they saw in their mother-in-law.

Satir (1972, p. 278) held the view that if you treat your relatives as real people, then maybe you can enjoy them. She felt that relatives often get locked into roles which prevent family members from knowing them as people.

Distance as a Factor in Relationships with Relatives

When relationships with relatives are somewhat tenuous, it is sometimes a solution to increase the distance between the couple and their relatives. Landis and Landis (1963, p. 339) made the comment that in early marriage, it is an advantage to live some distance away from both families to establish a sound base for the marriage.

Rosenberg and Anspach (1973, p. 53) found that more people see their relatives if they are nearby.

Udry (1966, p. 381) felt that it is difficult to maintain

intimate emotional ties where great distance separates parents and their married children. He suggested that how far a child is willing to move from his parents is some indication of how much emotional attachment remains.

Frequency of Contact with Relatives and Financial Aid from Relatives

There seems to be some similarity between the time when financial assistance is more often given by parents and the time of most conflict with in-laws. The receiving of all kinds of aid is greatest during the first ten years of the couple's marriage reaching its peak during the third to ninth year according to Adams (1964, p. 330).

A study done by Gibson (1972, p. 20) indicated that the frequency of contact with relatives declines with age and is greater for the married than the single.

Satisfaction with Marriage

Satisfaction with marriage is a broad topic such that specific authors have chosen to quantify it in different ways. Landis (1970, p. 390) discussed the degree of adjustment required by husband and wife and concluded that women inevitably must adjust more than men because of the demands of marriage itself. In most cases, she must change her life to fit his vocational interests as well as meet the changing needs of her children.

Burgess and Wallin (1953, p. 416) supported this view by saying that both husband and wife make adjustments in marriage

but that the wife has made the greater adjustment.

The results of Burgess and Cottrell (1939, p. 246-8) indicated that happiness in marriage is higher during the first year of marriage and then drops about ten points during the first six or eight years. After many years of marriage it seems to be somewhat higher again but not as high as it was in the beginning.

Cuber and Harroff (1965, p. 102), when studying upper middle class couples who had been married for at least ten years, found that very few couples rated their marriage as deeply satisfying. They concluded that at this stage and strata of life that self rated good marriages are an exception rather than the rule.

A "middle-age slump" a time when clients are dissatisfied with their marriage, was described by Landis (1970, p. 436) as a common occurrence encountered by counselors which substantiated the claims made by the other authors.

The study that specifically related happiness in marriage and getting along with in-laws was done by Landis and Landis (1963, p. 334) and included 544 couples in their early years of marriage. Of those couples who had an excellent in-law adjustment, sixty-seven per cent said that their marriages were very happy. Of those with fair or poor in-law relationships, only eighteen per cent rated their marriages as very happy. These authors also reported finding the same results in the parent generation. They found that the longer it had taken the parent couples to work out a

satisfactory relationship with in-laws, the more likely the marriage was to be rated as unhappy.

A study using a representative sample of married women living in Detroit in 1955 (Blood and Wolfe, 1960, p. 264) showed that marriage is less and less satisfactory as time goes on. They reported that fifty-two per cent were very satisfied during the first two years of marriage while only six per cent were still very satisfied twenty years later. Since that time, society has changed considerably with women now making up a large part of the working force and therefore more often being exposed to outside stimulation. This may have had an effect on their satisfaction with marriage.

A follow-up study of 1000 couples done by Pineo (1962, p. 11) found that over twenty years, the feelings of love and sense of permanence of husbands and wives declined significantly. These results could be termed the "disenchantment" of marriage, a term which is described in many marriage manuals.

Summary

This chapter has been an overview of the major areas of research that have been carried out in regard to relatives and their effect on marriage.

There is overwhelming support for the view that relatives are more of a problem to the newly married couple in their first years of marriage, although many of these problems persist into later marriage.

The specific relatives who usually cause the most problems are the husband's mother, the wife's mother, and the husband's sister in that order, revealing a definite feminine pattern in conflicts with relatives. This feminine pattern is further substantiated by the finding that wives are more involved with their relatives than are their husbands.

There is still some speculation as to the reasons for greater conflicts with specific relatives, however dependency and general immaturity are frequently cited as contributing factors. A more psycho-analytical approach gives displacement of repressed feelings as a likely reason.

It appears that couples are more likely to see their relatives more often if they are nearby and that if they accept financial aid from parents it is usually in the earlier years of their marriage.

There is much support for the opinion that satisfaction with marriage declines with duration of the marriage. One would therefore expect couples to be very satisfied with their marriage in the first few years even though this is usually the time marked by the most interference by relatives.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN AND PROCEDURE

Questionnaire (Appendix I)

The questionnaire devised by the investigator included information which assisted in describing the couples of the study and provided the required information to test the hypotheses. Five-point rating scales were used for a large segment of the questionnaire and the last two pages of the questionnaire were taped together to produce a continuous table of rating scales. The questionnaires were placed in self-addressed envelopes for return by mail.

Prior to distributing the questionnaires, expert advice was sought from university personnel for its design and content. Suggestions were also made by six graduate students who read the questionnaire as respondents. No formal pilot study was carried out; however changes were made in the questionnaire in response to the information sought from others as mentioned. One group of the sample received their questionnaires about two weeks before the other group supposedly allowing time to make necessary changes.

It was decided to offer two ten dollar gift certificates as an enticement to return the questionnaires by a specified date. The questionnaires were numbered in pairs to identify husband-wife combinations but otherwise had no unit numbers or names from which

the respondents could be identified

Sample

The sample was originally planned to include couples from two very different groups:

(a) Michener Park Residents

(b) Alberta School for the Deaf employees.

If the results from these groups had been very similar, it was thought that they would have been more representative of the general population of Edmonton.

(a) Michener Park tended to house predominantly young married students (the majority were 22 - 30 years of age) who were in the early years of their marriage (0 - 5 years) with an annual income of supposedly not more than $7500. The number of years that they had been in Canada varied but was greater than 20 years for the majority. They could have been in their first year of university or near completion of a graduate degree.

(b) The employees of the Alberta School for the Deaf were government employees and were representative of an older age group, 31 - 50 mainly with duration of marriage 11 to greater than 20 years on an average. They tended to have more children and their residence would have been of a more permanent nature. This sample varied widely in terms of occupation and included teachers, child care workers, food service personnel, engineers, secretaries, caretakers, laundry workers, psychologists and carpenters to mention most of the occupations. An attempt was

made to obtain information for the total population of the Alberta School for the Deaf. However, due to the few returns, what in fact was obtained was a sample of that population.

The life styles of the people in the two groups would have been decidedly different with work hours and family routines having different forms in each group.

Procedure

Most of the married employees of the Alberta School for the Deaf were contacted personally by the investigator, whereupon the person either agreed to take the self addressed envelopes containing the questionnaires for himself and his spouse to complete or stated that he preferred not to take part in the study. Fifty-nine employees took questionnaires, although at the time they had no guarantee that their spouse would cooperate. In most cases, the employees asked questions about the questionnaire, mainly why the information was required and what would be done with the material. A small number of persons wished to look at the questionnaire prior to making their decision about taking part in the research. The reason given to the prospective respondent for doing the research was to see what influence relatives have on their marriage and their general feelings towards their relatives. The fact that the questionnaires were anonymous was stressed as well as the date of the draw for the gift certificates.

Since there were 547 couples living in Michener Park, a random sample was obtained by computer and numbers assigned to each

unit. Fifty-nine questionnaires were given out to this group which included those living in high rise apartments as well as row houses. All but two of those contacted agreed to particpate in the study. The reason given by the two residents who declined was that it was exam time and they would be too busy to complete the questionnaire by the specified date. Generally the response from this group was very positive.

Due to the fact that only fifteen couples from the Alberta School for the Deaf returned their questionnaires completed, four of which had misunderstood the last question and rated only their in-laws rather than their own relatives as well, the analysis of that group of couples will be presented but the results will not be heavily weighted. Forty-one couples from Michener Park returned their questionnaires completed and these respondents will be the sample from which the main results will be taken.

Analysis of Data

For both groups, Michener Park and the Alberta School for the Deaf, frequency distributions were compiled initially for husbands and wives separately and then together as an aggregate for the two groups of the sample.

Then t tests were run to determine the significance of the differences if any between husbands and wives, on various aspects of the questionnaire.

Due to difficulties in existing computer programs for

carrying out analysis of variance, where part of the data is missing (where there was no relative), correlations were computed using the Kendall correlation coefficient. Much of the data is ordinal and therefore lends itself more to analysis using Kendall's tau measures of correlation rather than Spearman's correlation due to the small number of categories (Blalock, 1960, p. 317).

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of a statistical analysis of the data from the questionnaires are described in this chapter. Data from the Michener Park sample makes up the major part of the chapter with the results of the employees from the Alberta School for the Deaf included to show the extent of variation. This variation could quite easily have been due to the difference in stages of family cycles; Michener Park being in an early stage (young couples with few children if any) and Alberta School for the Deaf employees being in a later stage of the family cycle. (See Table VIII for comparison of the two groups.)

The reader must be cautioned to recall that the sample from the Alberta School for the Deaf was substantially smaller than that for Michener Park. All of the six hypotheses were tested at the .05 level of significance and stress differences between husbands and wives rather than between the two samples.

Hypothesis I

The general feelings of husbands and wives toward individual relatives are positively correlated with their satisfaction rating of the marriage.

This hypothesis was tested by using Kendall's B Coefficient where the rating of satisfaction of marriage by husbands and wives

were correlated separately with their separate general feeling toward each relative. In the questionnaire, the respondent had a choice of a rating scale of between -2 and +2 for both their satisfaction of their marriage and their general feeling toward individual relatives. The parts of the questionnaire for which this question applies appear on page 3 and 5 respectively of the questionnaire. (Appendix I).

When this hypothesis was first formulated, it was anticipated that for both husbands and wives, the marriage satisfaction rating would be positively correlated with their rating of their general feelings toward individual relatives. While this appeared to be true for Michener Park wives, there was almost no significant correlation of this kind for their husbands except for the wife's aunt and uncle. (See Table IA).

The significant positive correlations at the .05 level for Michener Park wives were: wife's brother, wife's aunt, husband's uncle and husband's cousin. For Michener Park husbands, there were no significant positive correlations. However, correlations for his rating of the wife's aunt and uncle were approaching significance and were both negative.

The hypothesis was supported for the wife's brother, wife's aunt, husband's uncle and husband's cousin. However, of the correlations which were not significant, there were more positive than negative correlations which was at most, consistent with this hypothesis. This would tend to agree with the findings of Landis and Landis (1963, p. 334) who found that happiness in marriage is related to getting along with

in-laws. The majority of respondents rated both the marriage satisfaction and feelings toward the wife's mother as satisfactory and positive respectively.

TABLE IA

KENDALL'S CORRELATIONS BETWEEN MARRIAGE SATISFACTION RATINGS AND GENERAL FEELING TOWARD RELATIVES RATINGS

MICHENER PARK

N = Number of Cases (varies with existence of such relatives or if failure to rate that question)
τ = Kendall's Coefficient
Sig. = Level of Significance

RELATIVE	WIFE			HUSBAND		
	N	τ	Sig.	N	τ	Sig.
Wife's mother	38	-0.0287	.400	38	+0.0	.500
Husband's mother	41	+0.1087	.158	40	-0.0910	.204
Wife's father	33	+0.1167	.170	33	-0.1256	.152
Husband's father	33	+0.1779	.073	33	-0.0222	.428
Wife's sister	28	+0.1858	.083	28	+0.0709	.298
Husband's sister	30	+0.0479	.355	30	+0.0723	.287
Wife's brother	26	+0.2806	.022*	26	-0.1021	.232
Husband's brother	28	+0.1962	.071	28	+0.0754	.287
Wife's aunt	31	+0.2278	.036*	31	-0.1644	.097
Husband's aunt	33	+0.1548	.103	33	-0.1124	.179
Wife's uncle	31	-0.0288	.410	31	-0.1974	.059
Husband's uncle	32	+0.3459	.003*	32	-0.0685	.291
Wife's cousin	28	-0.0261	.423	28	-0.0844	.264
Husband's cousin	27	+0.2437	.037*	26	+0.1414	.156
Wife's grandmother	21	+0.0563	.361	21	-0.0455	.386
Husband's grandmother	21	+0.0281	.429	21	+0.0440	.390
Wife's grandfather	14	+0.3136	.059	14	+0.1783	.187
Husband's grandfather	10	+0.0449	.428	9	+0.2949	.134

*significant difference at .05 level

Results from the Alberta School for the Deaf where they differ substantially from the Michener Park sample will now be described.

For the Alberta School for the Deaf wives, the significant correlation with the wife's mother was negative while the significant correlations with the husband's mother and cousin were positive. For the husbands of this group, all significant correlations were positive including the wife's aunt, uncle, and cousin. For these positive and significant cases, the hypothesis was supported. (See Table IB).

It is interesting to speculate as to the cause of the negative correlation between the feeling toward the wife's mother and the satisfaction of marriage ratings. This could be due to the negative effect on the marriage of dependency on the parents and immaturity as put forth by Klemer (1970, p. 282) and Winch (1960, p. 299). However, the crosstabulations or joint frequency distributions of the marriage satisfaction rating with the feeling toward the wife's mother indicated that the negative correlations resulted from a tendency toward a positive marriage rating coupled with negative feelings toward the wife's mother.

For the Michener Park sample, the correlation of the marriage satisfaction rating with feelings toward the wife's mother was small and not significant. For the Alberta School for the Deaf sample, this correlation was relatively large and significant but the group of respondents small. The large negative correlation was determined in this instance by only a few cases.

TABLE IB

KENDALL'S CORRELATION BETWEEN MARRIAGE SATISFACTION RATINGS AND GENERAL FEELING TOWARD RELATIVES RATINGS

ALBERTA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

N = Number of Cases
τ = Kendall's Tau
Sig. = Level of Significance

RELATIVE	WIFE			HUSBAND		
	N	τ	Sig.	N	τ	Sig.
Wife's mother	8	-0.5010	.041*	10	-0.0884	.361
Husband's mother	11	+0.5252	.012*	9	+0.4152	.060
Wife's father	8	+0.4234	.071	9	+0.1072	.344
Husband's father	6	+0.3198	.184	6	+0.2010	.286
Wife's sister	7	+0.3114	.163	9	+0.4073	.063
Husband's sister	11	-0.0800	.366	9	+0.0415	.438
Wife's brother	7	0.0	.500	10	+0.0282	.455
Husband's brother	12	+0.0401	.428	8	+0.0517	.429
Wife's aunt	10	+0.2887	.123	13	+0.4673	.013*
Husband's aunt	12	+0.1305	.277	10	-0.0588	.406
Wife's uncle	8	-0.0550	.424	11	+0.4058	.041*
Husband's uncle	7	+0.2981	.174	8	-0.0529	.427
Wife's cousin	9	-0.0426	.437	11	+0.5311	.011*
Husband's cousin	7	+0.7303	.011*	8	+0.2117	.232
Wife's grandmother	2	**		2	**	
Husband's grandmother	3	+0.8165	.100	4	0.0	.500
Wife's grandfather	1	0.0	.500	1	0.0	.500
Husband's grandfather	1	0.0	.500	2	-1.000	.159

**value could not be computed
*significant difference at .05 level

Hypothesis II

The wife's general feelings towards individual relatives is more positively correlated with the satisfaction rating of the marriage than the husband's general feeling.

The same statistical analysis was used to test this hypothesis as for Hypothesis I. In the Michener Park sample, all positive correlations found to be significant for the wives were indeed larger than those of their husbands. (See Table IA). Therefore this hypothesis was supported by the Michener Park sample. This supports the results of related studies such as Adams (1968, p. 27) who found that women were more likely to say that relatives were "very important" while men said that they were "somewhat important" in their total life situation.

For the Alberta School for the Deaf employees, Hypothesis II was supported in the case of the husband's mother but was not supported for any other significant correlation within that group. (See Table IB). Within this group, the correlations were derived from a small number of respondents.

As an aggregate casual observation, these results could suggest that relatives become less important to couples in a later stage of the family cycle and less influential to their marriage satisfaction, particularly from the wife's point of view.

Hypothesis III

Husbands tend to rate their marriage as being more satisfactory than do their wives.

For the statistical testing of this hypothesis, t values were computed to determine the significance of the differences in the means of the ratings by husbands and wives as to their marriage satisfaction.

The mean marriage satisfaction rating for both the Michener Park and the Alberta School for the Deaf samples was higher for husbands than for their wives which is consistent with the hypothesis but is not significant. In neither case was the difference significant, possibly due to the small samples sizes. (See Table II). This is consistent with the implications of previous statements made by Landis (1970, p. 390), who speaks of a greater adjustment required by wives, and by Burgess and Wallin (1953, Ch. 8), but was not as significant as might have been anticipated.

It was also noteworthy that the mean marriage satisfaction rating for the Alberta School for the Deaf, representing the couples married longer, was lower than that for Michener Park. This agrees with findings reported by Burgess and Cottrell (1939, p. 246-8) and Pineo (1962, p. 3 - 11) which indicate that happiness in marriage is greater in the first few years of marriage.

TABLE II

RATINGS FOR HUSBANDS AND WIVES ON THEIR PERCEPTION OF THE SATISFACTION OF THEIR MARRIAGE

	MICHENER PARK (41 couples)		ALTA. SCHOOL FOR DEAF (15 couples)	
	WIVES	HUSBANDS	WIVES	HUSBANDS
Mean	4.7561	4.8537	3.9333	4.0714
Degrees of Freedom	80		27	
t value (2 tail probability)	-0.80 (0.429)		0.32 (0.750)	

5 point rating scale from 1 to 5 ("Very unsatisfactory" to "very satisfactory).

Hypothesis IV

There is more variation in the wife's general feelings toward their individual relatives than in the husband's general feelings toward their individual relatives.

F ratios of the variances for husbands and wives were used to determine the significance of the differences between the variances of their rating of their general feelings toward the individual relatives.

This hypothesis was formulated with the expectation that the closer involvement of wives with relatives should have resulted in more extreme ratings and therefore greater variation. Such a claim was supported in the case of the mother and brother of both husbands and wives of Michener Park. (See Table III).

No significant differences at the .05 level were found in the Alberta School for the Deaf sample.

TABLE III

F VALUES OR RATINGS OF GENERAL FEELINGS TOWARD RELATIVES

N = number of cases

Sig.= Level of significance

RELATIVE	MICHENER PARK F VALUE	N	SIG.	ALBERTA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF F VALUE	N	SIG.
Wife's mother	2.17	38	0.021*	1.15	8	0.810
Husband's mother	2.30	40	0.011*	3.56	9	0.085
Wife's father	1.38	33	0.366	1.59	8	0.550
Husband's father	1.24	33	0.550	1.24	6	0.822
Wife's sister	1.13	28	0.754	3.60	7	0.129
Husband's sister	1.61	30	0.204	2.82	9	0.156
Wife's brother	2.39	26	0.033*	2.93	7	0.202
Husband's brother	2.90	28	0.008*	1.19	8	0.848
Wife's aunt	1.53	31	0.248	3.61	10	0.061
Husband's aunt	1.08	33	0.820	1.19	10	0.809
Wife's uncle	1.09	31	0.808	1.85	8	0.422
Husband's uncle	1.31	32	0.462	1.99	7	0.390
Wife's cousin	1.03	28	0.944	1.98	9	0.339
Husband's cousin	1.22	26	0.620	1.11	7	0.881
Wife's grandmother	1.07	2;	0.878	0.0	2	1.000
Husband's grandmother	1.00	21	1.000	1.33	3	0.909
Wife's grandfather	1.00	14	1.000	0.0	1	1.000
Husband's grandfather	1.03	10	0.976	0.0	1	1.000

*Significant at the .05 level

Hypothesis V

Wives perceive the influence of individual relatives on their marriage as being greater than do their husbands.

This hypothesis was tested using the t test to measure the significance of the difference in the means of the ratings by husbands and wives of the influence of individual relatives on their marriage.

Only two mean ratings of the influence of individual relatives on the marriage were significantly different between the husbands and wives in the Michener Park sample at the .05 level of significance. (See Table IV). Wives rated the influences of their own mothers greater than did their husbands while the husbands rated the influence of their brothers greater than that perceived by their wives.

No significant differences were obtained for the Alberta School for the Deaf sample. Even though not significant, but consistent with the hypothesis, slightly more mean ratings by wives exceeded those of their husbands. Larger samples would possibly have raised the significance of any differences which did occur. However, the hypothesis as stated was supported for only the two above mentioned cases. Prior research done by Adams (1968, p. 27) indicated that women more often said that relatives are more important to their total life situation than did their husbands. The present study results were not in strong support of Adam's research but were not inconsistent with it.

TABLE IV

MEAN RATINGS OF THE INFLUENCE OF RELATIVES ON MARRIAGE

N = number of cases
Sig.= level of significance

RELATIVE	MICHENER PARK					ALBERTA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF				
	WIVES	N	HUSBANDS	N	SIG.	WIVES	N	HUSBANDS	N	SIG.
Wife's mother	3.7632	38	3.3158	38	.038*	3.5000	8	3.2727	11	.698
Husband's mother	3.4878	41	3.4878	41	1.00	3.2727	11	3.2222	9	.935
Wife's father	3.8788	33	3.7576	33	.585	3.4286	7	3.4545	11	.968
Husband's father	3.6667	33	3.7941	34	.541	3.8388	6	4.5000	6	.177
Wife's sister	3.3929	28	3.1481	27	.234	4.1429	7	3.4000	10	.180
Husband's sister	3.1667	30	3.2000	30	.860	3.3000	10	3.1111	9	.644
Wife's brother	3.1538	26	2.9615	26	.258	2.8571	7	3.1818	11	.595
Husband's brother	3.0741	27	3.4643	28	.047*	3.3333	12	3.2222	9	.818
Wife's aunt	3.1613	31	3.0645	31	.565	3.6000	10	2.8571	14	.164
Husband's aunt	3.2121	33	3.2121	33	.522	3.2500	12	3.4000	10	.756
Wife's uncle	3.2258	31	3.0323	31	.150	3.5000	8	3.0909	11	.494
Husband's uncle	3.1250	32	3.1875	32	.679	2.8571	7	3.7143	7	.167
Wife's cousin	3.1071	28	3.0357	28	.530	3.1111	9	3.4167	12	.598
Husband's cousin	3.1481	27	3.0769	26	.546	3.7143	7	4.0000	8	.528
Wife's grandmother	3.2000	20	3.0476	21	.453	3.5000	2	3.0000	2	.423
Husband's grandmother	3.2000	20	3.0952	21	.678	3.6667	3	3.7500	4	.932
Wife's grandfather	3.1429	14	2.9286	14	.384	9.0	1	0.0	1	.500
Husband's grandfather	3.0000	10	3.2000	10	.331	0.0	1	4.0000	2	.260

*significant at .05 level as determined by the t test

5 poing rating scale used from 1 to 5 ("very negative influence" to "very positive influence")

Hypothesis VI

Where there is a difference in perceptions between husbands and wives on the influence of individual relatives on the marriage, there is likely to be a corresponding difference in the rating of the marriage satisfaction.

Since significant differences between husbands and wives were not observed for the satisfaction of marriage ratings, correlations with this difference were not attempted. (See Table II). However, other variables were found to yield mean ratings by husbands and wives which differed at slightly less than the .10 level of significance as noted in Table V. The differences in ratings for these variables were correlated with the actual marriage satisfaction ratings by husbands and wives. The relevant variables are listed in Table V.

The strongest significant correlations found were from the Michener Park sample. Differences in ratings (wife's rating minus husband's rating) concerning the husband's father and uncle were found to be at the .01 and .02 level of significance, respectively. Apart from noting the fact that these relatives were male, no explanation was attempted for this finding.

TABLE V

VARIABLES FROM t VALUES FOR WHICH THE RESPONSES OF HUSBANDS AND WIVES DIFFERED SIGNIFICANTLY

VARIABLE	MEANS WIVES	N	HUSBANDS	N	SIG.	SAMPLE
Frequency of disagreements over child-rearing	1.5833	36	1.3158	38	.074	MP
Educational level	3.3902	41	4.4878	41	.000	MP
Frequency of disagreements over use of leisure time	1.6098	41	1.8780	41	.082	MP
General feeling toward wife's mother	4.7368	38	4.2632	38	.013	MP
General feeling toward husband's mother	4.0000	41	4.5750	40	.012	MP
General feeling toward husband's father	4.1515	33	4.5758	33	.070	MP
General feeling toward wife's sister	4.5000	28	4.1071	28	.045	MP
General feeling toward husband's brother	3.9286	28	4.5714	28	.001	MP
General feeling toward husband's uncle	3.5000	32	3.8750	32	.072	MP
Influence of wife's mother on marriage	3.7632	38	3.3158	38	.038	MP
Influence of husband's brother on marriage	3.0741	27	3.4643	28	.047	MP
Frequency of communication with husband's brother	2.5769	26	3.0000	26	.088	MP
General feeling toward husband's brother	2.9167	12	4.0000	8	.050	ASD
Frequency of communication with wife's mother	2.0000	9	2.5455	11	.063	ASD

5 point rating scale from 1 to 5

ASD = ALBERTA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

MP = MICHENER PARK

Summary of Hypotheses Results

The results of this study were less conclusive than anticipated. Nevertheless, several noteworthy observations can be made.

The results tended to be at least consistent with the hypothesis that general feelings toward individual relatives are positively correlated with the satisfaction of marriage rating for the wife's brother and aunt, and the husband's uncle and cousin It is necessary to note here that a major exception involved the negative and significant correlations found with feelings towards the wife's mother and satisfaction of marriage rating.

In consideration of the smallness of the sample sizes which tended to decrease significance, the results tended to support the second hypothesis that the wife's general feelings towards individual relatives are more postively correlated with their satisfaction rating of the marriage than the husband's general feelings.

The third hypothesis that husbands tend to rate their marriage more satisfactorily than do their wives, was not supported at the .05 level of significance. However the findings were not inconsistent with this hypothesis. A secondary finding was that there was a lower marriage satisfaction rating for both husbands and wives for the couples married longer.

With respect to Hypothesis IV that there is more variation in the wife's general feelings toward their individual relatives than in the husband's general feelings toward their individual

relatives than in the husband's general feelings toward their individual relatives, this hypothesis was supported for the mother and brother of both husbands and wives of the Michener Park sample.

The suggestion that wives are more sensitive to the influence of relatives upon their marriage was neither supported nor refuted. The small sample sizes undoubtedly contributed to the inconclusiveness of the results.

In its stated form, Hypothesis VI was found to be untestable due to the lack of significant differences between the husbands' and wives' ratings of their marriage satisfaction. Of the other variables for which significant differences did exist, only differences between the husbands and wives ratings with respect to the husband's father and uncle were found to be significantly correlated with the marriage satisfaction ratings within the Michener Park sample.

It is particularly pertinent to note that where differences occurred between the Michener Park and Alberta School for the Deaf samples, it could quite likely be explained by research done by Komarovsky (1940, p. 516) who stated that in-law tensions vary with the stage of the family cycle. The Alberta School for the Deaf group is considered to be in a much later cycle than the Michener Park respondents (Table VIII) and would therefore be expected to differ substantially as a group.

The results of this study may have been more meaningful if the hypotheses posed had taken into account the different family life cycles.

Ancillary Findings

Causes of Disagreements

In order to place the problem of relatives in perspective, Tables VIA and VIB have been included to compare the mean frequency ratings of husbands and wives for the ten "causes of disagreement" which appeared on page 4 of the questionnaire. It was interesting to note the differences between the ratings of the respondents of the two groups which were consistent with the view put forth earlier that the differences in results are likely due to differences in the family cycle. Ratings have been therefore included from each sample separately so that comparisons can be made.

Out of this list of ten causes of disagreements, wives and husbands from Michener Park ranked relatives in first and second place respectively while the employees of the Alberta School for the Deaf ranked them seventh and eighth respectively. This was consistent with findings by Blood and Wolfe (1960, p. 247) who found that the younger the couple, the more difficulty they experienced with in-laws.

The view put forth by Saxton (1968, p. 247) that economic stress is the main cause of conflict in American families was not apparent in the present study where finances were ranked third consistently by both samples. Both samples ranked friends and religion low as causes of disagreements.

Child rearing was ranked second by both husbands and wives from the Alberta School for the Deaf while Michener Park husbands

and wives ranked it seventh and eighth. This might be explained by the fact that when children get older as in a later stage of the family cycle, they cause more disagreements between husbands and wives over such things as discipline and amounts of freedom that should be allowed.

It was of interest to note that the highest mean rating for any one of these causes of disagreements in either sample was above the rating of "cause very few disagreements", but not as high as "cause moderate number of disagreements". The majority of the respondents of the sample indicated on their ratings that they had less than a moderate number of disagreements about any subject even though they were given the option of adding other causes of disagreements if they chose to do so.

TABLE VI A

MEAN RATINGS OF FREQUENCY OF DISAGREEMENTS IN MARRIAGE ON TEN SELECTED SUBJECTS IN RANK ORDER FOR MICHENER PARK (41 COUPLES)

	SUBJECT OF DISAGREEMENT	MEAN FREQUENCY RATING		SUBJECT OF DISAGREEMENT
		WIVES	HUSBANDS	
1.	Relatives	2.024	2.073	Household duties
2.	Household duties	2.000	2.073	Relatives
3.	Finances	1.951	1.951	Finances
4.	Sexual relationships	1.902	1.927	Work habits
5.	Work habits	1.750	1.878	Use of leisure time
6.	Decision making	1.750	1.878	Decision making
7.	Child rearing	1.639	1.805	Sexual relationships
8.	Use of leisure time	1.625	1.561	Friends
9.	Friends	1.625	1.316	Child rearing
10.	Religion	1.350	1.293	Religion

5 point rating scale from 1 to 5 ("cause no disagreements" to "cause very large number of disagreements")

TABLE VI B

MEAN RATINGS OF FREQUENCY OF DISAGREEMENTS IN MARRIAGE ON TEN SELECTED SUBJECTS IN RANK ORDER FOR ALBERTA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF EMPLOYEES (15 COUPLES)

	SUBJECT OF DISAGREEMENT	MEAN FREQUENCY RATING WIVES	HUSBANDS	SUBJECT OF DISAGREEMENT
1.	Decision making	2.733	2.667	Work habits
2.	Child rearing	2.714	2.500	Child rearing
3.	Finances	2.400	2.357	Finances
4.	Sexual relationships	2.267	2.286	Sexual relationships
5.	Household duties	2.143	2.286	Household duties
6.	Work habits	2.071	2.000	Decision making
7.	Relatives	2.000	1.933	Use of leisure time
8.	Use of leisure time	1.667	1.786	Relatives
9.	Friends	1.500	1.769	Friends
10.	Religion	1.429	1.154	Religion

5 point rating scale from 1 to 5 ("cause no disagreements" to "cause very large number of disagreements")

Overall General Feelings Toward Relatives (Table VII)

Worthy of note is the fact that none of the mean ratings of feelings toward relatives aggregated over both samples were negative on a rating scale ranging from -2 to +2, or very negative to very positive. Similarly, all but one mean rating of perceived influence of relatives on the marriage were positive even though tending to be small. The single villain appeared to be the wife's grandfather as perceived by the husbands. This latter rating was however very close to zero meaning an indifferent feeling.

The implication of these observations was taken to be that relatives are generally perceived more positively than negatively.

The mean rating of the perceived influence of relatives on a marriage was less than the mean rating of their general feelings toward relatives, most of which lie between "no influence" and a "somewhat positive influence". This was somewhat surprising since research done by Blood and Wolfe (1960, p. 247) and Landis (1948, p. 19) indicated that the younger the couple, the more difficulty they experienced with in-laws. Since the majority of the respondents came from Michener Park who are generally a younger population (See Table II), one would have expected their general feelings toward and influence of these relatives to be more negative. However, the fact that all but three couples were financially independent of their parents could have accounted for part of this result.

The general stereotype that reflects upon relatives as being "negative people", mothers-in-law in particular, can also be refuted by these results of mean ratings of feelings toward relatives and their influence on a marriage.

TABLE VII

MEAN AGGREGATE RATINGS TOWARDS RELATIVES*

	GENERAL FEELINGS TOWARD RELATIVE		PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF RELATIVE ON MARRIAGE	
RELATIVE	WIVES	HUSBANDS	WIVES	HUSBANDS
Wife's mother	1.6522	1.0816	0.7174	0.3061
Husband's mother	0.9038	1.5102	0.4423	0.4400
Wife's father	1.4390	1.3256	0.8000	0.6818
Husband's father	1.1538	1.5641	0.6923	0.9000
Wife's sister	1.5143	0.9737	0.5429	0.2162
Husband's sister	1.0732	1.2051	0.2000	0.1795
Wife's brother	1.3030	1.0000	0.0909	0.0270
Husband's brother	0.6250	1.4444	0.1538	0.4054
Wife's aunt	0.7317	0.5556	0.2683	0.0000
Husband's aunt	0.7556	0.7442	0.2222	0.1860
Wife's uncle	0.7692	0.7903	0.2821	0.0476
Husband's uncle	0.4103	0.7750	0.0769	0.2821
Wife's cousin	0.6486	0.4750	0.1081	0.1500
Husband's cousin	0.5000	0.6471	0.2647	0.2941
Wife's grandmother	1.0000	0.6957	0.2273	0.0435
Husband's grandmother	1.0000	1.0000	0.2609	0.2000
Wife's grandfather	1.0000	0.8667	0.1333	-0.6667
Husband's grandfather	1.0000	1.2727	0.0000	0.3333

*Ratings were on a 5 point scale from -2 to +2 as seen on page 5 of the questionnaire.

TABLE VIII

DESCRIPTION OF THE COUPLES FROM THE MEANS OF THE TWO GROUPS

VARIABLE	MICHENER PARK	ALBERTA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF
Age	22 - 30 years	31 - 50 years
Duration of marriage	0 - 5 years	11 to greater than 20 years
Number of children	0 or 1 child	2 or 3 children
Education level	bachelor degree	post high school training but less than bachelor degree
Number of years in Canada	greater than 20 years	greater than 20 years
Distance from relative	in Alberta or within Canada	in Alberta or within Canada
Communication with immediate family	weekly to monthly (mainly monthly)	monthly to biannually
Communication with other family	monthly to biannually	biannually to yearly

Other Information From the Questionnaire

It may be of interest to the reader to mention some of the material given in the questionnaires in response to the 'other' columns which occurred under the 'causes of disagreements' as well as under the 'names of relatives' columns on pages 4 and 5 of the questionnaire.

Under the causes of disagreements column, the following items with no duplications were added by the respondents: pleasure drinking, smoking, etc.; dictating; lack of communication; time spent studying; social activities, common ethnic background; inhibitions; school; and last but not least was the item questionnaires.

Under the 'names of relatives' column appeared the following items: stepmother, close friends, grandcousin; wife's brother; sister-in-law; and brother-in-law. Friends appeared three times and sister-in-law appeared twice with the items being given positive as well as negative ratings.

Space was left at the end of the questionnaire for comments which in most cases was not utilized. A small number of persons indicated that a deceased relative had had a strong influence on their marriage and would like it to be noted. Another comment indicated that the couple generally have not allowed their family to interfere with their relationship directly.

The effect of offering the gift certificates was an unknown

quantity. However, feedback from each group indicated that interest was high to possibly change the date of the draw which was to occur on a holiday week-end and also to know who had won. The majority of the questionnaires were returned by the date of the draw for the gift certificates.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary and Conclusions

The present study was concerned with establishing differences, if any, between husbands and wives in their ratings of their general feelings toward and perception of influence of their individual relatives on their marriage. It was hoped to find a relationship between these differences in the ratings and the marriage satisfaction as perceived by the husband and wife.

Questionnaires were given out to 118 couples in self addressed envelopes, 56 were returned; 41 from residents of Michener Park and 15 from the employees of the Alberta School for the Deaf. Five point rating scales were used in the questionnaire by husbands and wives separately to gather information on the following measures; overall satisfaction of marriage, frequency of disagreements on ten items, influence of these items on the marriage, general feelings toward eighteen relatives, influence of these relatives on the marriage, distance of couple's residence from these relatives, and frequency of communication with these relatives.

The results of this study were less conclusive than anticipated possibly due to the smallness of the sample sizes. Nevertheless, it was found that general feelings toward individual relatives in many cases tended to be positively correlated with the satisfaction of marriage rating, with the wife's general feelings towards relatives being more positively correlated than those of

her husband.

The hypothesis that husbands tend to rate their marriage more satisfactory than do their wives was generally supported but not at the .05 level of significance. A secondary finding was that there was a lower marriage satisfaction rating for both husbands and wives for the couples married longer.

Since significant differences between husbands and wives were not observed for the satisfaction of marriage ratings, correlations were attempted between differences of ratings by husbands and wives on other variables with their actual marriage satisfaction rating.

Additional findings from the questionnaire which were not part of the hypotheses were also of interest. Out of ten "causes of disagreements", wives and husbands from Michener Park ranked relatives as first and second while Alberta School for the Deaf respondents ranked relatives as seventh and eighth. This difference in ratings as well as other differences found in the two samples, tended to suggest that couples in the early stage of the family cycle see the influence of their relatives as being quite different from couples in the later stages of the family cycle. The results also indicated that relatives, even mothers-in-law, are generally perceived as being more positive than negative.

Despite the fact that few significant results were found from the present study, these areas of interest could become the focal point of future research.

Implications for Further Research

The difficulties encountered in attempting to gather data from the Alberta School for the Deaf illustrated the problems in using questionnaires as tools to gather data. In order to preserve anonymity, it was necessary to depend upon self addressed envelopes and reliance on individual commitments to complete and return the questionnaires. The fact that the spouse had to agree to participate was definitely a problem for some couples as a few questionnaires from the Alberta School for the Deaf were returned with that explanation.

It is not surprising that the return of questionnaires from Michener Park was considerably higher as students would tend to be much more oriented toward education and research. A few respondents made the comment that they hoped to be doing their thesis soon themselves and realized the importance of cooperation from a sample.

The reliability of the responses of the couples to the satisfaction of their marriage question on the questionnaire could easily have been influenced by whether or not the couple had just had an argument. The motional component of the respondent was a variable that would be difficult to control.

A carefully planned pilot study to include those with lower educational levels may have led to changes which would have prevented the misreading of the last part of the questionnaire. In this study, those who misread the last question did not return their questionnaires until after the second group had been given

theirs which meant that changes could not be made to clarify the questionnaire.

The reasons for not wishing to take part in the study as given by the employees of the Alberta School for the Deaf were as follows: cause a marriage break-up, spouse wouldn't cooperate, afraid it would not be anonymous and didn't wish to rate the satisfaction of their marriage, cause too many arguments, didn't want to mix work and home affairs.

Husbands and wives could have influenced each other's feelings about specific relatives when choosing a relative for each category or they may have discussed their feelings about each question while doing the questionnaire.

In relation to the questionnaire rating scales, a wider range of allowed responses for husbands and wives may have provided a more sensitive measure of small differences that were otherwise obscured.

Implications for Future Use of the Information from this Study:

Even though the results of the study cannot be generalized, they could be useful as a basis for further research into the area of relatives and their influence on marriage.

With a prevention model in mind, the results of this study suggest that more time could be spent in marriage education courses on discussion of relationships with relatives and of how they might affect the forthcoming marriage. This is particularly true since

studies show that early marriage is the time when most conflict with relatives is experienced.

The discussion of relationships with relatives would be a good opportunity to discuss dependence and independence to assist the couple in their awareness of how problems might arise. Their feelings about their own parents could also be explored with the view that displacement of feelings onto parents-in-law is not an uncommon phenomenon.

REFERENCES

Adams, B. Structural factors affecting parental aid to married children. Journal of Marriage and Family Living, 1964, 26, 327-331.

Adams, B. Kinship in an Urban Setting. Chicago: Markham Publishing Company, 1968.

Blalock, H. Social Statistics. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company Inc., 1960.

Blood, R. & Wolfe, D. Husbands and Wives: The Dynamics of Married Living. Illinois: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1960.

Blood, R. Marriage. New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1962, 2nd Ed.

Burgess, E. & Cottrell, L. Predicting Success or Failure in Marriage. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1939.

Burgess, E. & Wallin, P. Engagement and Marriage. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1953.

Cuber, J. & Harroff, P. The more total view: Relationships among men and women of the upper middle class. In H. Rodman (Ed.), Marriage, Family and Society: A Reader. New York: Random House, 1965.

Duvall, E. In-laws, Pro and Con. New York: Association Press, 1954.

Duvall, E. & Hill, R. Being Married, Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1960.

Flugel, J. Psycho-analytical Study of the Family. London: Hogarth Press, 1935, 5th Ed.

Gibson, G. Kin family network: overheralded structure in past conceptualizations of family functioning. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1972, 34, 13-23.

Klemer, R. Marriage and Family Relationships. New York: Harper and Row Publishers, Inc., 1970.

Komarovsky, M. Functional analysis of sex roles. American Sociological Review, 1950, 15, 508-516.

Landis, J. Length of time required to achieve adjustment in marriage. American Sociological Review, 1946, 11, 667-677.

Landis, J. & Landis, M. Building a Successful Marriage. Toronto: Prentice-Hall of Canada, Ltd., 1963, 4th Ed.

Landis. P. Making the Most of Marriage. New York: Meredith Corporation, 1970.

Pineo, P. Disenchantment in the later years of marriage. Marriage and Family Living, 1961, 23, 3-11.

Robins, L. & Tomanec, M. Closeness to blood relatives outside the immediate family. Journal of Marriage and Family Living, 1962, 24, 340-346.

Rosenberg, G. & Anspach, D. Working Class Kinship. Toronto: D. C. Heath and Company, 1973.

Satir, V. People Making. Palo Alto: Science and Behavior Books, Inc., 1972.

Saxton, L. The Individual, Marriage, and the Family. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, Inc., 1972, 2nd. Ed.

Sussman, M. Sourcebook in Marriage and the Family. U.S.A.: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1955.

Thomas, J. The American Catholic Family. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1956.

Udry, R. The Social Context of Marriage. New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1966.

Wallin, P. Sex differences in attitudes to in-laws. American Journal of Sociology, 1954, 466-469.

Winch, R. The Modern Family. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1952.

APPENDIX I

QUESTIONNAIRE

I. INTRODUCTION

This questionnaire is designed to gather data for a masters thesis. It deals with the ways that husbands and wives feel about their relatives and the degree of influence these relatives have on the marriage. The questionnaire should take no more than 30 to 40 minutes to complete.

In partial recognition of the imposition of this questionnaire, there will be a draw for two $10 gift certificates on April 15th. In order to enter the competition simply return the completed questionnaire which has been numbered. Keep page 2 which contains your number. The winning numbers will be announced in the Michener Park Newsletter and posted in the staff lounge at the Alberta School for the Deaf. Watch for the announcement so that the winners can contact me. I will have no way of contacting you.

If there are any problems or questions arising out of the questionnaire, please phone 433-1813 after 6:00 p.m.

Marilyn Day

II. LIST OF RELATIVES

1. For Section VI, it is very important that the husband and wife fill out the questionnaire with the same relatives in mind. Therefore, prior to looking at the rest of the questionnaire, please fill out the following LIST OF RELATIVES, choosing only one name for each blank.

2. However, you are asked not to discuss your feelings toward these relatives, just to agree upon the ones whom you think have had the most influence on your marriage either positively or negatively.
3. This list may be filled out by either husband and wife or both together.
4. If you have no relatives in one of the categories or have had no contact written or spoken with that relative place a (-) minus sign in the blank and ignore that category throughout the questionnaire.
5. These questionnaires will be held in strict confidence.

KEEP THIS PAGE

NUMBER. . . . .

LIST OF RELATIVES

1. Wife's mother. . . . . .
2. Husband's mother . . . . . .
3. Wife's father. . . . . .
4. Husband's father . . . . . .
5. Wife's sister. . . . . .
6. Husband's sister . . . . . .
7. Wife's brother . . . . . .
8. Husband's brother. . . . . .
9. Wife's aunt . . . . . .
10. Husband's aunt . . . . . .
11. Wife's uncle . . . . . .
12. Husband's uncle . . . . . .
13. Wife's cousin. . . . . .
14. Husband's cousin. . . . . .
15. Wife's grandmother . . . . . .
16. Husband's grandmother . . . . . .
17. Wife's grandfather . . . . . .
18. Husband's grandfather . . . . . .
19. Other. . . . . .
(Please indicate relationship)

III. GENERAL DIRECTIONS

1. Except for deciding upon a common set of relatives upon which to base the answers in section VI, husbands and wives are asked NOT to compare responses.
2. All answers to questions should be numbers or (-) minus signs whichever is appropriate.

NUMBER. . . . .

IV. VITAL STATISTICS RETURN THIS PART OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

(Please insert the appropriate number in the space provided to answer these questions about yourself).

1. Age (years). . . . .

2. Sex (1=Male, 2=Female). . . . .

3. Duration of Marriage (years). . . . .

4. Number of Children. . . . .

5. Educational attainment or expected attainment if presently in a student program.
   1 = less than complete high school
   2 = completed high school
   3 = trade, technical, or non-university professional
   4 = bachelor's degree
   5 = university graduate training/degree

   . . . . .

6. Length of time that you have lived in Canada (years) . . . . .

7. Are you dependent upon relatives for any financial assistance?

   . . . . . 1 = yes 2 = no

8. Are you:
   1 = an employee of the Alberta School for the Deaf or
   2 = living in Michener Park?

   . . . . .

Please rate your overall satisfaction with your marriage.

-2 = very unsatisfactory
-1 = somewhat unsatisfactory
 0 = neutral
+1 = somewhat satisfactory
+2 = very satisfactory

-2 -1 0 +1 +2 Circle the appropriate number.

V. MARRIAGE SATISFACTION

The following factors are recognized as contributing to disagreement in marriage.

In Column A, please rate these factors to indicate whether or not they cause disagreements in your marriage.

In Column B, please rate these factors to indicate how much they have influenced your marriage.

Please circle the appropriate number

CAUSES OF DISAGREEMENTS	FREQUENCY OF DISAGREEMENTS COLUMN A	INFLUENCE COLUMN B
	1= cause no disagreements 2= cause very few disagreements 3= cause moderate number of disagreements 4= cause large no. of disagreements 5= cause very large number of disagreements	1 = no influence 2 = very little influence 3 = moderate influence 4 = large influence 5 = very large influence
Finances	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Relatives	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Sexual Relationships	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Child rearing	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Work Habits	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Household duties	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Religion	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Use of Leisure time	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Decision making	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Friends	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Other (explain)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

VI FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

In order to rate the items on this page, use the LIST OF RELATIVES on page 2 and substitute the names of YOUR relatives for those in this chart. Use the 5 point scale provided and circle the appropriate number.

1. In COLUMN A, rate your general feeling toward the following relatives.

2. In COLUMN B, rate the amount of influence that each of these relatives has had on your marriage.

3. In COLUMN C, indicate where each relative now lives.

4. In COLUMN D, rate your frequency of communication by visit, letter, or telephone, with each of these relatives.

	COLUMN A	COLUMN B	COLUMN C	COLUMN D	
	-2=very negative -1=somewhat negative 0=indifferent +1=somewhat positive +2=very positive	-2=very negative influence -1=somewhat negative influence 0=no influence +1=somewhat positive influence +2=very positive influence	1=In Edmonton 2=Within 100 miles 3=In Alta. But outside 100 miles 4=In Canada-out of Alberta 5=Outside Canada	1=daily 2=Weekly to monthly 3=monthly to twice a year 4=twice a year to a year 5=less than once a year	
RELATIVE	GENERAL FEELING TOWARD RELATIVE	INFLUENCE ON YOUR MARRIAGE	PLACE OF RESIDENCE	FREQUENCY OF COMMUNICATION	
1. Wife's mother	-2 -1 0 +1 +2	-2 -1 0 +1 +2	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	
2. Husband's mother	-2 -1 0 +1 +2	-2 -1 0 +1 +2	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	
3. Wife's father	-2 -1 0 +1 +2	-2 -1 0 +1 +2	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	
4. Husband's father	-2 -1 0 +1 +2	-2 -1 0 +1 +2	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	
5. Wife's sister	-2 -1 0 +1 +2	-2 -1 0 +1 +2	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	
6. Husband's sister	-2 -1 0 +1 +2	-2 -1 0 +1 +2	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	
7. Wife's brother	-2 -1 0 +1 +2	-2 -1 0 +1 +2	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	LEAVE THIS
8. Husband's brother	-2 -1 0 +1 +2	-2 -1 0 +1 +2	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	COLUMN
9. Wife's aunt	-2 -1 0 +1 +2	-2 -1 0 +1 +2	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	BLANK
10. Husband's aunt	-2 -1 0 +1 +2	-2 -1 0 +1 +2	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	
11. Wife's uncle	-2 -1 0 +1 +2	-2 -1 0 +1 +2	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	
12. Husband's uncle	-2 -1 0 +1 +2	-2 -1 0 +1 +2	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	
13. Wife's cousin	-2 -1 0 +1 +2	-2 -1 0 +1 +2	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	
14. Husband's cousin	-2 -1 0 +1 +2	-2 -1 0 +1 +2	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	
15. Wife's grandmother	-2 -1 0 +1 +2	-2 -1 0 +1 +2	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	
16. Husband's grandmother	-2 -1 0 +1 +2	-2 -1 0 +1 +2	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	
17. Wife's grandfather	-2 -1 0 +1 +2	-2 -1 0 +1 +2	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	
18. Husband's grandfather	-2 -1 0 +1 +2	-2 -1 0 +1 +2	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	
19. Other (Please indicate relationship.....)	-2 -1 0 +1 +2	-2 -1 0 +1 +2	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	

COMMENTS: